

MELITO IN THE LIGHT OF THE PASSOVER HAGGADAH

IN 1960 Dr. F. L. Cross first pointed out some affinities between Melito's *Peri Pascha* and the Israelite Passover Haggadah.¹ Later the same year he developed his point more fully,² and wrote: 'So far from Melito's work being a homily, the key to its understanding, unless we are mistaken, lies almost certainly in the fact that what we have here is nothing else than a Christian Paschal Haggadah. As such it is unique in Christian literature.'³ His arguments were as follows:

(i) The opening of *PP*⁴ implies a Hebrew reading from Exodus xii, followed first by a vernacular translation or paraphrase and then by *PP*, which is an explanation in Christian terms of the Pascha. *PP* thus has the same function as the Passover Haggadah in Jewish tradition.

(ii) The themes of the Passover Haggadah outlined in *Pesahim* x. 5 are all present in *PP*. These include the deliverance from Egypt (*passim*), the Passover (i.e. the lamb itself, again *passim*), the bitter herbs and the unleavened bread (both explained in Christian terms in *PP* 93).

(iii) There is a close verbal parallel between the closing lines of *Pesahim* x. 5, which are incorporated in the traditional Passover Haggadah, and *PP* 68.

Most writers now dissent from the view that *PP* 1 implies a prior reading in Hebrew.⁵ This view added colour to the argument for dependence upon Jewish paschal tradition, but its rejection does not substantially affect the weight of Cross's argument.

A further contribution was made by Eric Werner in an article in 1966.⁶ Marred by cavalier and superficial use of evidence, as well as by deplorable harshness of tone, this article nevertheless contained interesting suggestions. Werner claims that the traditional *Impropria* of the Latin rite for Good Friday, which has Byzantine and Georgian parallels,

¹ *J.T.S. N.S.* xi (1960), pp. 162-3.

² *The Early Christian Fathers*, London, 1960, pp. 104-9.

³ p. 107.

⁴ *PP* = *Peri Pascha*.

⁵ See for instance O. Perler, *Méliton de Sardes 'Sur la Pâque'* (Sources chrétiennes, 123), Paris, 1966, pp. 131-3; R. Cantalamessa, *L'omelia 'In S. Pascha' dello Pseudo-Ippolito di Roma*, Milan, 1967, pp. 434-6 (especially n. 10); W. Huber, *Passa und Ostern* (Z.N.W. Beiheft 35), Berlin, 1969, pp. 32-3. I have attempted to demonstrate that the arguments for a Hebrew reading are invalid: see *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten* (Münster, 1970), pp. 236-48.

⁶ 'Melito of Sardes, first poet of Deicide', *Hebrew Union College Annual*, xxxvii (1966), pp. 191-210.

is a parody, based on Hebrew sources, of the *Dayenu* or 'welfare-litany' associated with the Passover Haggadah. The *Dayenu* originally had fifteen verses, and is pre-Christian in date;¹ the *Improperia* similarly has fifteen verses. Having established a connection—presumably ancient—between these Christian and Jewish paschal texts, Werner suggests that the 'welfare-litany' of *PP* 87–9, which can be reckoned as containing fourteen or fifteen clauses, is itself 'the origin of the *Improperia*'.² It is Werner's purpose to trace both the *Improperia* ritual and the charge of Deicide to Melito as their inventor. With these dubious points we are not concerned. All that we need do is note the possible connection of *PP* 87–9 with the possibly pre-Christian *Dayenu*. Even here the case is far from clear. For one thing Melito is not consistent in the length and phrasing of his clauses, which makes their enumeration uncertain; the refrain *πόσου ἀνετιμήσω* occurs only seven times, and at irregular intervals; for another, there is a different and longer 'welfare-litany' in *PP* 81–6. Werner alleges that this longer sequence can be reduced to fourteen items.³ But his method of counting is utterly arbitrary, ignoring many items and separating others; here the refrain is *οὗτος ἦν* or *οὗτός ἐστιν*, which occurs eight or nine times, and at irregular intervals. Further, both these versions of Melito's 'welfare-litany' might well have a scriptural background in such passages as Psalms cv (civ) and cxxxvi (cxxxv); Werner himself points to such a link, as indicated in the next paragraph under (iii). Nevertheless, the very presence of such passages in *PP* when the Haggadah contains such a recital is significant, if we are noting parallels between the two.

Werner considers several other features of *PP* as reflecting or contradicting Jewish practices and traditions. Some are highly improbable, as when he suggests that the derivation of *πάσχα* from *πάσχειν* in *PP* 46 is a conscious fraud by one who knew Syriac, but who wanted to 'avoid every unnecessary Hebraism'.⁴ Other features are related to non-paschal Jewish tradition. Those which bear on the Passover Haggadah are these:

(i) Melito's use of the 'rather recherché' expression *ἀφικόμενον* of the coming of Christ in *PP* 66 is intended to mimic the enigmatic reference to Aphikomen in the Haggadah, which Werner proposes to interpret in

¹ Werner cites L. Finkelstein, 'Pre-Maccabean documents in the Passover-haggada', *Harvard Theological Review*, xxxvi (1943), pp. 1–39 and E. D. Goldschmidt, *Seder Haggadah schel Pesach*, Tel-Aviv, 1947, pp. 44–7 (there is a German edition, *Die Pessach-Haggada*, Berlin, 1937). While weighty, these authorities do not convince everyone that the *Dayenu* is pre-medieval. The text I have used is on pp. 29–32 of C. Roth's edition, *The Haggadah*, London (Soncino Press), 1959.

² Art. cit. 201.

³ Art. cit. 202–3.

⁴ Art. cit. 204–5, referring in error to *PP* 16.

the light of the Greek word used by Melito as *the guest*.¹ This seems slight argumentation, and is not helped by the repeated misspelling ἀφικόμενον or by the failure to note the same verb in *PP* 16, 18, and 86.

(ii) The Quartodeciman fast for the Jews—Werner does not note the possible allusion in the reference to Christ's starvation in *PP* 80—is a continuation of the ancient Jewish fasting of the first-born on 14 Nisan.² The difficulty here is to find evidence for the antiquity of the Jewish custom; no rabbinic material is offered in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*.³

(iii) 4 Esdras xv. 7–21 represents a link between Melito's welfar-elitany, the *Improperia*, and the Old Testament, inasmuch as it consists of an indictment by God of Israel.⁴ This weakens, rather than strengthens, the case for dependence on the *Dayenu*.

(iv) Werner notes the affinity between *PP* 68 and the 'oldest Hebrew prayer-book, the Siddur R. Amram'.⁵ But he fails to note the closer text in the Passover Haggadah and *Pesahim* x. 5.

It is clear that Werner has added little positive to the discussion, but his suggestions may be borne in mind.

There has not, I think, been any other advance in explaining Melito's debt to Jewish paschal tradition. Perler significantly developed our understanding of his relation to the later Christian tradition, not least by pointing out the connection between *PP* and the later *Exultet* or *Praeconium paschale* in its various forms.⁶ If it is indeed the case that *PP* has affinities both with the *Improperia* and the *Praeconium*, its origin in the undivided paschal practice of the second-century Church will be further assured. But our purpose is to look the other way, beyond Melito to his connections with Jewish paschal practice.

The first step is to confirm the literary affinity between *PP* 68 and *Pesahim* x. 5, which was the last and perhaps the strongest part of Cross's argument summarized above. The basic parallel is as follows:

Mishnah *Pesahim* x. 5
(= Passover Haggadah)

Peri Pascha 69

He brought us out
from bondage to freedom
from sorrow to gladness
and from mourning
to a festival day

Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ῥυσάμενος ἡμᾶς
ἐκ δουλείας εἰς ἐλευθερίαν

¹ Art. cit. 205–6. In Roth's edition the spelling is Aphikoman, and the word is explained as derived from ἐπίκωμοι, *dessert* (*The Haggadah*, London, 1959, pp. viii and 44–5).

² Art. cit. 205, n. 12.

³ *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, New York and London, 1895, ix. 552b–553a.

⁴ E. Werner, art. cit. 208–9.

⁵ Art. cit. 209.

⁶ O. Perler, *Méliton de Sardes Sur la Pâque*, Paris, 1966, pp. 24–9.

and from darkness (הַפֶּלֶא)
to a great light

and from servitude
to redemption

So let us say before him
[Haggadah adds: a new song]
the *Hallelujah*¹

ἐκ σκότους
εἰς φῶς
ἐκ θανάτου εἰς ζωὴν
ἐκ τυραννίδος
εἰς βασιλείαν αἰώνιον
[A adds: καὶ ποιήσας ἡμᾶς
ἱεράτευμα καινὸν
καὶ λαὸν περιούσιον
αἰώνιον]

The similarity is obvious, and the differences can be narrowed. First, the clauses 'from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning to a festival day' appear to have been incorporated in the haggadic text direct from Esther ix. 22, perhaps at a date later than the original eulogy. There is in fact a rabbinic source which gives a similar text in a form nearer in some respects to that of Melito, *Exodus Rabbah* 12. 2:

[Themes like those in Targum Exod. xxii. 42 precede.]
It is like a king who has released his son from prison
and proclaims: Make this day each year a festival day,
this day when my son passed
from darkness (חָשֶׁךְ) to light
from the iron yoke to life
from bondage to freedom
from servitude to redemption.²

The Esther couplet is missing, as in Melito. But further, 'great' is omitted before 'light',³ and the next clause introduces the term 'life' in the same position in the series as *ζωήν* in Melito. Again, the number of parallel clauses is four, as in Melito. On the other hand the order of the first two of the parallel clauses is inverted, and neither the introduction nor the ending are as near to *PP* as the haggadic text. It seems likely that all three texts cited are direct descendants of a Jewish liturgical recitation of pre-Christian times.

For completeness, some other similar texts should be quoted. The comparison points up the strong links between the three explicitly paschal texts already cited.

¹ Cited from H. Danby's *The Mishnah*, Oxford, 1933, p. 151.

² Cited from R. le Déaut, *La Nuit pascale* (Analecta Biblica, 22), Rome, 1963, p. 235, where the text is given in Hebrew and French. I have been careful to render the Hebrew words by the same terms as Danby uses in the *Mishnah* text cited above. Le Déaut's thorough study of the Targum to Exod. xii. 42 is most valuable.

³ Dr. Leaney seems to have been in error in citing the Haggadah text with the clause 'from darkness to light', omitting 'great', in his interesting attempt to set 1 Peter in a context of Jewish paschal practice (A. R. C. Leaney, '1 Peter and the Passover, an interpretation', *N.T.S.* x [1964], pp. 238-51—citation on p. 247).

(i) Siddur R. Amram: 'And he brought them out from oppression to relief, and from darkness (חֹשֶׁךְ) to light, and from bondage to redemption.'¹

This may well be dependent on a Passover prayer, but is unlikely to be, as Werner suggested, the source for Melito.

(ii) 1 Peter ii. 9: ὑμεῖς δὲ γένος ἐκλεκτόν, βασιλεῖον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς.

It is possible that 1 Peter is here influenced by the Passover Haggadah. It is also possible that 1 Peter's collection of Old Testament phrases (mostly from Exod. xix. 6) has influenced Melito or the A-text of PP 68. But it is not possible that PP 68 is exclusively dependent on 1 Peter, and not also on a text resembling the Haggadah.

(iii) Col. i. 12-13: εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ τῷ ἱκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κληροῦ τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί· ὃς ἔρρυσάτο ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους καὶ μετέστησεν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ, . . .

In addition to the theme of darkness and light, Melito's verb appears in ἔρρυσάτο.

(iv) In Acts xxvi. 17-18 Jesus says to Paul: . . . ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω σε ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν, τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκότους εἰς φῶς καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ Σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, . . .

A connection with (iii) subsists inasmuch as both passages mention remission of sins in the immediate context, and both mention the 'lot among the saints' (Acts xxvi. 19, Col. i. 12, 14).

(v) 1 Clement lix. 2-3: . . . Χριστοῦ, δι' οὗ ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ σκότους εἰς φῶς, ἀπὸ ἀγνωσίας εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν δόξης ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, ἐλπίζειν ἐπὶ τὸ ἀρχηγόνον πάσης κτίσεως ὀνομά σου, ἀνοίξας τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν . . .

This passage is probably liturgical. It seems to reflect Acts xxvi. 18, cited above, but the verb (ἐκάλεσεν) occurs in 1 Peter ii. 9.

(vi) Pseudo-Hippolytus *Eis τὸ ἅγιον πάσχα* I, 2 (P. Nautin, *Homélies pascales* I [Sources chrétiennes, 27], p. 116): ἐκ πάθους ἀπάθεια, ἐκ θανάτου ἀθανασία, ἐκ νεκρότητος ζωή, ἐκ πληγῆς ἴασις, ἐκ πτώσεως ἀνάστασις, ἐκ καθόδου ἀνάβασις.

¹ Translated from the Hebrew in E. Werner, *Hebrew Union College Annual*, xxxvii (1966), p. 209.

Cantalamessa, who claims that the whole homily is from the same background as Melito, draws attention to the parallel.¹

(vii) *Evangelium Veritatis* xxv. 10–18: 'In the Reunion each one shall receive himself (again). In a Gnosis he will purify himself in many ways in a reunion, as it [i.e. the Gnosis; *others translate* he] eats up the Matter within him like a flame and the darkness with a light, and the death with a life.'²

In this obscure passage the last two phrases have the same members and the same order as Melito, and the same as the Passover Haggadah if the Esther quotation is excised. All seven texts cited may reflect in different degrees the style and content of the Passover Haggadah. But there is no clear connection with the Pascha except in the case of (vi), though a connection has been postulated for (ii).³ And nowhere does the similarity approach that between *PP* 68 and the two Passover texts.

We do well then to conclude that Cross is fundamentally right to find in *PP* 68 evidence for the theory that *PP* is a Christian Passover Haggadah, verbally reflecting Jewish tradition. On the other hand, the theory meets two powerful objections which make it untenable as it stands. The first arises from the formal reading of Exod. xii. 1–20 implied by *PP* 1 and 11–17. I can find no evidence for the reading of this text on the eve of Passover earlier than Melito. It is true that *Pesachim* x requires the paterfamilias to explain features of the paschal meal, and for this a knowledge of Exod. xii would help. But he is expected to teach by catechesis rather than by formal reading and exposition. Further, where the traditional Haggadah seems to recommend biblical recital and exposition, the texts are Josh. xxiv. 2–4, Deut. xxvi. 5–9(?), the *Hallel* Psalms, and perhaps Exod. i. 4; xii. 27, 39.⁴ A considerable number of other texts, including some from Exod. xii, are quoted

¹ R. Cantalamessa, *L'omelia 'In S. Pascha' dello Pseudo-Ippolito di Roma*, Milan, 1967, p. 107.

² Cited from *The Gospel of Truth, A Valentinian Meditation on the Gospel*, translated by K. Grobel, London, 1960, pp. 98–100.

³ See for instance A. R. C. Leaney, *N.T.S.* x (1964), pp. 244–8.

⁴ A. R. C. Leaney, *N.T.S.* x (1964), p. 245, following C. Roth's *The Haggadah*, London, 1959, pp. 18–19, 20–6, 38–62. See also W. Huber, *Passa und Ostern*, Berlin, 1969, p. 4, and Danby's scripture references in *The Mishnah*, London, 1933, pp. 150–1. The authorities cite Deut. xxvi. 5–8, which is the passage actually expounded in the Haggadah (Roth, pp. 20–6). This stops short of Deut. xxvi. 9, which refers to the settlement in Canaan and is hardly appropriate for the Diaspora. But the earlier haggadic tradition is likely to have included this verse. The *Dayenu* (Roth, pp. 29–32) includes the settlement and the building of the temple; so does the prose summary which follows it (Roth, p. 33), a passage which could itself be an ancient short Haggadah. For reasons which will appear, I believe the longer text is relevant to Melito.

in the course of the exposition. None of the specified texts appears in *PP*, though there may be allusions.

Secondly, the structure of *PP* is not that of a Passover Haggadah. *Pesahim* x. 4 directs: 'According to the understanding of the son his father directs him. He begins with the disgrace and ends with the glory; and he expounds from *A wandering Aramean was my father* . . . until he finishes the whole section [Deut. xxvi. 5-9(?)]'. As it stands *PP* begins with a preliminary eulogy of Christ the Pascha (1-10), continues with a paraphrastic account of the first Passover (11-15), a bloodcurdling exposition of the slaughter of the first-born (16-30), and an explanation of the salvation of the Israelites through the presence of Christ in the guise of the paschal lamb (30-45), which includes a fairly technical discussion of exegetic method (35-40); Melito then begins to explain the Pascha in terms of the creation and fall of man (46-56), deals with the prediction and history of the incarnation (57-71), with the rejection and crucifixion of Christ and the punishment of Israel (72-100), and concludes with the triumph of Christ and his gift of salvation (100-5). The end is glorious enough, but the pattern of the whole does not correspond to that of disgrace-glory, nor to the general line of Deut. xxvi. 5-9, which recites the descent into Egypt, the growth and oppression of Israel, the marvellous deliverance from Egypt, and the settlement in the land of promise. Melito's work cannot be forced into the same mould.

We are thus faced with a problem, if we wish to establish a clear relationship between *PP* and its Jewish background. One important step is to identify the Jewish precedents for the reading and exposition of Exod. xii. 1-20. According to Büchler's reconstruction of the triennial lectionary of the ancient synagogue, this passage would be part of the *seder* for the first sabbath of Nisan in the second year.¹ But that was not the only tradition. Büchler cites also talmudic tradition that 'Lectures are held on the laws concerning Passover thirty days before the festival; R. Simeon b. Gamliel says two weeks before.'² Such lectures would naturally include reference to or exposition of Exodus xii. According to Mishnah *Megillah* iii. 4,³ on uncertain authority, a *seder* beginning at Exod. xii. 1 was read on the fourth or third Sabbath of Adar, as the last of a series of special lectures for that month, which precedes Nisan. This agrees with neither of the items noted by Büchler. It is therefore clear that the reading of Exod. xii. 1-20 and the exposition of Passover law took place in various Jewish traditions on one of the Sabbaths

¹ A. Büchler, 'The reading of the Law and the Prophets in a triennial cycle', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, v (1893), pp. 420-68, especially 432-3; A. Guilding, *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship*, Oxford, 1960, pp. 13-14.

² A. Büchler, art. cit. 450-1, quoting *Pes.* 6a.

³ Danby, *The Mishnah*, p. 205.

shortly before 14 Nisan. This point is confirmed by the evidence for associating Exod. xii. 29 onwards with the first day of Passover—the morning after the Passover meal—and Exod. xiii. 7 onwards with the seventh and last day of the feast.¹ We may have in pre-paschal reading and exposition the true antecedent for the reading of Exod. xii. 1–20 on Passover eve. Once the Temple ceased to exist, part of the purpose of teaching the Passover law a week or two before the festival would be lost. Soon the idea that the reading of the relevant scripture formed a meritorious substitute for the now impossible ritual could develop among the Jews.² The Passover law might be transferred to Passover eve as a result. But if this did happen among the Jews, the tradition is apparently lost. Such a practice is, in any case, more appropriate to the synagogue, where the faithful meet on 1 Pesah, i.e. 15 Nisan, than to the domestic celebration of Passover eve. More likely, then, the shift took place among Christians. The Church met both as a synagogue and as a family, the *οἶκος θεοῦ*, and it might meet on the paschal vigil in both capacities.³ Perhaps Melito's declamation is an exposition of the traditional pre-paschal kind, which has absorbed into it certain memorable features of the Passover Haggadah. It would thus be a kind of hybrid, and the difficulty which scholars have experienced in classifying it would be understandable. But I have a simpler and more radical solution to propose.

It can reasonably be maintained that *PP* falls into two parts, the transition from the first to the second coming at 46: *Τὸ μὲν οὖν διήγημα τοῦ τύπου καὶ τῆς ἀναποδόσεως ἀκηκόατε· ἀκούσατε καὶ τὴν κατασκευὴν τοῦ μυστηρίου*. This is in fact where Blank put the last major division of the book in his analysis of its structure.⁴ Perler made it one of the three most important breaks, though he subordinated it to that at 72.⁵ If there is any truth in J. Smit Sibinga's analysis in terms of syllable-count, that would also confirm the importance of 46 as the middle point in the structure of *PP*.⁶ The view which I now propose is that sections

¹ A. Büchler, art. cit. p. 435.

² See for instance *Lev. R.* 2. 11, discussed by G. Vermès, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, Leiden, 1961, p. 210.

³ For all these points see B. Lohse, *Das Passafest der Quartadecimaner*, Gütersloh, 1953, p. 76.

⁴ J. Blank, *Meliton von Sardes 'Vom Passa'* (Sophia, 3), Freiburg im Breisgau, 1963, p. 42.

⁵ O. Perler, *Méliton de Sardes 'Sur la Pâque'* (Sources chrétiennes, 123), Paris, 1966, pp. 43–4.

⁶ J. Smit, 'Sibinga, Melito of Sardis, the artist and his text', *Vigiliae Christianae*, xxiv (1970), pp. 81–104. I do not find his thesis convincing. The author has supported it with a similar study of Acts, especially the speeches, in his lecture *Literair handwerk in Handelingen*, published by E. J. Brill at Leiden, 1970.

1-45 of *PP* are in fact an exposition of Exod. xii. 1-20, a Christian version of the Jewish pre-Passover Sabbath exposition, while sections 46-105 are recognizably a Christian Passover Haggadah. Whether or not they were intended to be recited at one time or two, we need not now decide. But evidence will be brought forward later to show that Melito was conscious of the two distinct elements in his work.

The first part is obviously an exposition of Exod. xii. 1-20. Its main theme is that the Old Testament Pascha prescribed by the Law is in fact an anticipation of the finished work of salvation in Christ, the Gospel, and the Church. This theme is very appropriate for the circumstances of Melito's day, imperilled as the Church was by Marcionism on the one hand and the powerful, cultured Judaism of Asia, and particularly Sardis,¹ on the other. We should perhaps be wise to recognize that many Christians of the second century, both those who were touched by the views of Marcion and the gnostic schools, and some who were not, may have shunned the observance of the Pascha as being part of the spent legalism of the old Israel. There were probably differences on this point from apostolic times.² If so, the first part of Melito's work would constitute a powerful plea for the integrity of the Old Covenant and the New, quite in character with the man who collected testimonia and listed the Old Testament canon.³ One point needs further explanation. The long and distressing account of the sufferings of the Egyptians (16-30) seems excessive if the main purpose was simply to expound the Christian significance of the Law. This passage may have been a customary dilation of the theme, taken over from the homiletic tradition of the synagogue; the comparable expansion in Wisd. xvii-xviii is perhaps another example. Alternatively, or perhaps simultaneously, Melito was trying to drive home the peril of exposing oneself to the wrath of God by not accepting the salvation offered to Jew and Gentile alike through baptism and adherence to the Church. It is Egypt τὴν ἀμύητον τοῦ μυστηρίου, τὴν ἄμοιρον τοῦ πάσχα, τὴν ἀσφράγιστον τοῦ αἵματος, τὴν ἀφρούρητον τοῦ πνεύματος, τὴν ἐχθράν, τὴν ἄπιστον (*PP* 16) that is struck by the angel of death. Finally, 1-45 is self-contained; if all our manuscripts broke off with the doxology at 45, no one would suspect that the work was incomplete. It is a brief but satisfying whole.

¹ See for instance D. G. Mitten, 'A new look at ancient Sardis', *The Biblical Archaeologist*, xxix (1966), pp. 38-68, and references there. The synagogue was apparently begun in the late second century A.D. (p. 66). The characterization of Trypho in L. W. Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, Cambridge, 1967, pp. 39-52, indicates the kind of Judaism with which Melito must have been familiar.

² The views of K. Holl are ably restated by M. Richard, 'La question pascale au II^e siècle', *L'Orient syrien*, vi (1961), pp. 179-212.

³ Melito Fragment 3, in Eusebius, *HE* iv. 26. 12-14.

The argument for finding a Christian Paschal Haggadah in the second part (46–105) is more complex, but powerful when cumulatively considered. First, it should be noted that all the points of contact between *PP* and the Passover Haggadah which we have already observed fall into this part of the homily. One or two themes, primarily the paschal lamb itself, are found, as one might expect, also in the first part. But the apparent verbal connection is in 68; the word ἀφικόμενος appears only in 66 and 86; the recital of benefits in *Dayenu* style occurs in 81–90; the bitter herbs and unleavened bread are mentioned only in 93. Secondly, the transition in 46 declares the new subject: ‘What is the Pascha?’ Melito turns from ‘the statement of the type and what corresponds to it’ to ‘what constitutes the mystery’. He is thus turning to the proper subject of the Passover Haggadah, which is designed to answer the children’s question, ‘What do you mean by this rite?’ (Exod. xii. 26).¹ Thirdly, this part of the homily has the shape prescribed for a Passover Haggadah, which we saw to be wanting in *PP* as a whole. It ‘begins with the disgrace and ends with the glory’. It starts with the creation and fall of man, and the entail of death and degradation which he bequeathed his progeny; it continues with the preparation for Christ, his coming, rejection, and death; it ends with his exaltation to heaven, whither he restores fallen man. Melito himself summarizes the whole in these words: μάθετε οὖν τίς ὁ πάσχων καὶ τίς ὁ τῷ πάσχοντι συμπαθῶν, καὶ διὰ τί πάρεστιν ὁ κύριος ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, ἵνα τὸν πάσχοντα ἀμφιασάμενος ἀρπάσῃ εἰς τὰ ὑψηλὰ τῶν οὐρανῶν (*PP* 46–7). We are in fact faced with a Gentile-Church transformation of the themes of the key text Deut. xxvi. 5–9, as an examination of some details will confirm.

Where Deut. xxvi. 5 says, ‘A wandering Aramean was my father’, *PP* recounts the creation, fall and expulsion from Eden of the father of all men, Adam (47–8). If Jacob ‘went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, few in number’ (Deut. xxvi. 5), so was the first man thrown ‘into this world as into a jail-house’ (*PP* 48). If Jacob ‘became there a nation, great, mighty and populous’ (Deut. xxvi. 5), so did Adam become ‘very prolific and very aged’ before he died (*PP* 49). If Israel suffered bitter oppression and bondage in Egypt (Deut. xxvi. 6), so did mankind on earth, weighed down with the tyranny of sin and death (49–56). So much for τίς ὁ πάσχων. Now Melito turns to τίς ὁ τῷ πάσχοντι συμπαθῶν, and argues that it is the Lord, the God of the Old Testament, who takes upon him the sufferings of fallen man. In 57–65 he recounts

¹ Compare the talmudic tradition of the forms of the question asked by the ‘four sons’, the second of whom asks it in just this form. This tradition is recited in the modern Haggadah (Roth, pp. 14–17).

how before the incarnation 'the Lord made predisposition of his own sufferings in patriarchs and in prophets and in all the People, setting his seal to them through Law and Prophets' (57). The correspondence is no longer so close, but the influence of the outline is still to be observed. Deut. xxvi. 7 reads, 'and we cried unto the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice, and saw our affliction, and our toil, and our oppression'. For the obedient haggadist and for Melito alike, the identity of the Lord who pitied the oppressed with the God of the patriarchs is expressly stated. In commenting on Deut. xxvi. 7 the traditional Haggadah actually cites Exod. ii. 24, 'and God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob'.¹ Melito discusses his next question, διὰ τί πάρεστιν ὁ κύριος ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, in 66–71, summarizing his answer in 66: 'It is he who came from heaven to earth because of him that suffered, and clothed himself in that very one by means of the virgin's womb and came forth a man, and received the sufferings of him that suffered through the body that was able to suffer, and destroyed the sufferings of the flesh; and by the Spirit that could not die he slew death the slayer of man.' The pattern-passage for the Haggadah has words to correspond: 'And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm' (Deut. xxvi. 8). *PP* 67–8 in fact explicitly compares Christ's salvation with the deliverance of Israel from Egypt; the thought is summed up in lines from 67: 'He redeemed us from the world's service as from the land of Egypt, and loosed us from the devil's bondage as from the hand of Pharaoh.' It is also notable that at the point where Melito states most fully his incarnational theology (*PP* 66, quoted above), the traditional Haggadah emphasizes that the Lord of Deut. xxvi. 8 is not an angel or messenger, but God himself.² The most difficult part of *PP* to reconcile with the haggadic pattern is 72–100, a passage largely concerned with the rejection of Christ by Israel. This may in part have been determined by the Mishnaic obligation to introduce an interpretation of the bitter herbs and unleavened bread, which Melito does in terms of Israel's cruelty and consequent punishment (93); this interpretation could, with appropriate expansion, have been a very early piece of Christian paschal tradition. If Werner is right, and we have in 81–90 a recitation somewhat between the *Dayenu* benefits-litany (associated with the Haggadah) and the *Improperia*, that also could account for the expansiveness of this passage beyond what Deut. xxvi. 5–9 prompts. But one must also allow for the long traditional association in Christian teaching of the disasters of the Jews with the crucifixion of Christ, an association already

¹ Roth, p. 23.² Roth, p. 24.

apparent in the synoptic gospels. Mark xiii is placed before the passion narrative for this reason, and the connection is strengthened in the other gospels (Matt. xxvii. 24-5; Luke xxiii. 27-31). Melito is, after all, commemorating among other things the anniversary of the death of Christ, and some expansion on its history and consequences is to be expected. Furthermore, Melito's historical situation might well require him to notice the iniquities, as he saw them, of Israel, both because of the power and influence of his Jewish contemporaries, and because he had to defend himself against the charge of Judaizing by his advocacy of the Pascha. Yet even this is not all. The passage enables him to expand upon the marvels of creation (81-3), the wonderful deliverance from Egypt (84-5, 88), the miracles wrought by Christ on earth (86, 89-90), and the portents accompanying the crucifixion (97-8). It is reasonable to see here further influence of Deut. xxvi. 8: 'The LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders.' The traditional Haggadah certainly expands upon the last three items, and different ways of relating them to the Egyptian plagues were known.¹ Finally, Melito 'ends with the glory' in the speech and the praises of the exalted Christ (100-5). Since his summary in 47 (ἵνα τὸν πάσχοντα ἀμφιασόμενος ἀρπάσῃ εἰς τὰ ὑψηλὰ τῶν οὐρανῶν) the recitations of Christ's work have included only his own resurrection and exaltation and the resurrection of man from the grave (66, 71; first two clauses of 100). Now for the first time they extend to the restoration of man to his heavenly homeland (102, 103), which is probably the Paradise from which he was originally expelled (47-8). The influence of the Haggadah pattern perhaps remains: 'and he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey' (Deut. xxvi. 9).²

An objection to the proposed analysis might arise from the alleged break after *PP* 71. Here Perler divided *PP* into two major parts. The break is preceded by a rhetorical anaphora (68-71), which includes the allusion to the climax of the Passover Haggadah, which itself leads on to the singing of the *Hallel*.³ Could this be the true end of the structure beginning at *PP* 46? I think not. It is indeed possible that a sub-structure is incorporated which itself follows the pattern of disgrace-glory. The traditional Passover Haggadah probably incorporates more than one earlier Haggadah,⁴ and such may have been the case in Melito's day.

¹ Roth, pp. 26-9.

² For the inclusion of this verse, see p. 34, n. 4 above.

³ *Pesahim* x. 5; Roth's *Haggadah*, p. 37.

⁴ L. Finkelstein, 'Pre-Maccabean documents in the Passover Haggadah', *Harvard Theological Review*, xxxv (1942), pp. 291-332; xxxvi (1943), pp. 1-39;

But the design predicted in *PP* 46 reaches its fulfilment only with the exaltation of man in 100-5, as we have just shown; and even the account of Christ's sufferings would be inadequate without some of the material in 72-100. Further, there is no doxology after 71 as there is in 10, 45, 65, and 105, which suggests that this is not a major division of the structure.

We may fairly claim to have established that *PP* 46-105 reflects the structure and to some extent the themes appropriate to a Passover Haggadah. It would be wrong to conclude that the passage is itself based upon Deut. xxvi. 5-9 or the Mishnaic prescriptions for Passover, or even that it is a direct imitation of a Jewish Haggadah. More likely, a tradition of Christian paschal Haggadah already existed, a tradition ultimately derived from a Jewish source which was itself based on Deut. xxvi. 5-9. The outline and some features would remain, progressively overlaid with Christian features, when the original basis was forgotten. In time, more light may be thrown on this development. For our present purpose it is sufficient that the haggadic outline is present in *PP* 46-105, and that it is thereby distinguished from the exposition of the Passover law in *PP* 1-45, which corresponds to a distinct Jewish observance, the pre-Passover synagogue instruction.

Having thus established largely on internal grounds the dual structure and ancestry of *PP*, we turn to some pieces of external evidence which confirm the conclusions so far reached and suggest further possibilities. The first is the evidence of the Georgian translation. The version published by Dr. Birdsall consists of *PP* 1-45 only, ending at precisely the point which seems to divide the homily in two. Birdsall judged the failure to complete the translation as due to the translator's grave difficulties with his material: 'Labouring under these evident difficulties, he hailed the first doxology as a haven in the storm, and having made landfall, was content to rest his venture there for good.'¹ But when the work for this present article was nearly complete, the important news reached Nottingham that *PP* 46-105 exists in a Georgian translation, circulating separately from 1-45, under the pseudonym of St. John Chrysostom. This discovery has been made by Fr. Michel van Esbroeck S.J. of the Bibliothèque des Bollandistes in Brussels, in the course of research into collections of Georgian material under the supervision of

G. Goldschmidt, *Seder Haggadah shel Pesach*, Tel Aviv, 1947 (Hebrew edition of *Die Pessach-Haggada*, Berlin, 1937). But I owe this point primarily to the observations of Dr. Raphael Loewe in a letter to Dr. Leaney, and I am grateful to both for their permission to refer to them. The same suggestion is used in n. 4, p. 34 above.

¹ See J. N. Birdsall, 'Melito of Sardis *Περὶ τοῦ πάσχα* in a Georgian version', *Le Muséon*, lxxx (1967), pp. 121-38. The quotation is from p. 122.

Professor Gérard Garitte of Louvain.¹ It may reasonably be inferred that *PP* circulated in the Georgian Church as two distinct works, divided at Section 46. How far back in the history of the Georgian, Armenian, Syriac, and Greek texts this division goes is a matter for experts to consider. But at least we can affirm that the point where we found the most important division is so clear a break that the scribal and ecclesiastical tradition has divided the work there and was satisfied with the parts as self-contained. At most, we might take the Georgian as evidence that in its origin *PP* consisted of two clear parts, successive books of a single work by the author.

This brings us to the second piece of external evidence. At the head of his list of Melito's writings, Eusebius refers to τὰ περὶ τοῦ πάσχα δύο.² Perler has attempted to reconcile this reference with the existence of our *Peri Pascha* by identifying Papyrus Bodmer xii as a fragment of Quartodeciman paschal liturgy, taken by Eusebius (or perhaps by Clement before him) as a second book of Melito's work.³ The question is undoubtedly complicated by the apparent quotation from *Peri tou Pascha* in Eusebius, *HE* iv. 26. 3. But if we regard that quotation, not as the opening of Melito's book on the Pascha, but as Clement's introductory rubric,⁴ Eusebius' first reference may be to the whole of *PP*, seen as one work in two books. If so, the division is early, probably as early as Clement of Alexandria.

The third piece of evidence is the form of the paschal homily variously attributed to Hippolytus and St. John Chrysostom, magisterially studied by Cantalamessa.⁵ Cantalamessa analyses the main part of this work (designated *IP* for short) in a threefold division derived principally from the homily's own statements in 6–7.⁶ Following his treatment, we might divide it as follows:

- (a) Introduction, reading from Exod. xii, and outline of homily (1–7).
- (b) Detailed explanation of the text (8–42).
- (c) Contemplation of the fulfilment of the paschal mystery in Christ (43–63).

¹ Fr. van Esbroeck wrote to Miss M. Whittaker with this information. I am indebted to both these scholars for permission to use it, though the use is my own. The text will be published in *Le Muséon*. ² *HE* iv. 26. 2.

³ O. Perler, *Ein Hymnus zur Ostervigil von Meliton?* (Paradosis, 15), Freiburg Schweiz, 1960, especially p. 32.

⁴ Perler, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–32, deals with the problems in a generally satisfactory way.

⁵ R. Cantalamessa, *L'omelia 'In S. Pascha' dello Pseudo-Ippolito di Roma*, Milan, 1967. The text cited is that of P. Nautin, *Homélies pascales 1* (Sources chrétiennes, 27), Paris, 1950, and page references are to that edition.

⁶ R. Cantalamessa, *op. cit.* 429–34.

Cantalamesa goes on to assimilate this scheme to that of *PP* in a manner which is, I believe, quite wrong. He deduces from *PP* 1 that *PP* was preceded by both a reading of scripture and a detailed verbal explanation like that in *IP* 11–42, and that *PP* as a whole therefore corresponds in practice to the third and last part of *IP* as analysed above.¹ In fact the assimilation is simpler. Each has a reading and exposition of Exod. xii (though not of precisely the same verses), which could reflect the Jewish pre-paschal practice (*PP* 1–45; *IP* 1–42);² each has a recitation of the saving work of Christ, and in Melito's case this takes the form of a Christianized paschal Haggadah (*PP* 46–105; *IP* 43–63). The question naturally arises whether *IP* 43–63 itself exhibits the pattern of the paschal Haggadah. On inspection, it will be found that such a pattern subsists, but that the process of Christianizing has gone much further than in Melito. In fact, *IP* 43–63 shows far more affinities with *PP* 46–105 than with the Jewish Haggadah. But some detail is needed to establish any connection at all.

The concentration on Christian sources and tradition is apparent throughout *IP* 43–63, not only in its frequent quotation from the New Testament (a practice without parallel in *PP*), but in its general contents. The author himself sums up this part of his work in *IP* 7, p. 133:

[After dealing with the Old Testament types] let us advance to the mysteries of the truth: What is the visitation of Jesus Christ subsequent to the Law, and why he came also with a body; what is the Pascha which he longed to eat with us, and why he who raised the dead with a word did not also utterly rebuke death while he lived, and why he also wholly endured death by a cross; what is the thorn with which he was crowned, or what the vinegar and gall which he drank, and what is his opened side from which poured blood and water; why he prays that the cup may pass which he came entirely to drink; who are the robbers who hung with him, and who the one of them that is in Paradise; why his spirit is commended to the Father's hands, but the body was in the tomb; what was going to be 'in Paradise' and happening 'today'; what is the three-day burial during which he tarries under ground, and why the women were first to see him, and he tells the good news, 'Greetings, ladies'?

As in Melito's summary (*PP* 46–7, quoted earlier) the nature of the Pascha is discussed, and as in Melito the Pascha is identified with Christ in his bodily suffering (*IP* 49, p. 175). This meets the requirement that the Haggadah must mention the Passover. The other items, the unleavened bread and bitter herbs, are not mentioned, though they are

¹ Ibid. 434–7. The theory of a preliminary exposition preceding *PP* 1 goes back to Bonner's early studies. I have argued for its complete rejection in *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten* (1970), pp. 236–48.

² Cantalamesa himself recognized that the discussion of exegetical matters in *PP* 1–45 creates difficulties for his own scheme of comparison, op. cit., p. 437.

present, interpreted as representing the bitter deeds and punishment of Israel, in the earlier part (*IP* 31). But we do find the thought which Melito associated with these items (*PP* 93), the bodily torments inflicted on Christ, in the discussion of the thorns, vinegar, and gall (*IP* 53, p. 179). The gall is called *τὴν πικρὰν καὶ ὀξεῖαν τοῦ δράκοντος χολήν*, preserving in *πικρὰν* what is for Melito the verbal link between the torments and the *πικρίδες*. The summary in *IP* 7 also shows similarities with *PP* 46–7 in its interest in the incarnation, passion, and glory of Christ. The missing element is the plight of man—Melito's *τίς ὁ πάσχων*, expounded in terms of Adam's fall in *PP* 47–56, which in turn corresponded to the suffering of Jacob and the descent and oppression in Egypt of Deut. xxvi. 5–6. When we turn to the fuller statement in *IP* 44, we find the coming of Christ described briefly as 'escape from slavery, release from ancient necessity, beginning of liberty.' And in *IP* 45 the account of the incarnation begins with reference to the human condition: 'Seeing us from above as we were being oppressed by death and being at once undone and bound by bonds of corruption, drifting into an ineluctable and irreversible way, he came. . . .' The fall and dissolution of man leads straight to the necessity for the incarnation, as in *PP* 56. But the old Passover emphasis on the suffering forefathers has been reduced to a mere preface to the incarnation. *IP* 46, pp. 167–71, is devoted to the 'names of the divinity', which are principally four, Lord, God, Son, and King; for these the author produces scriptural testimonies. He then states, with suitable evidence, that other titles are to be added: Lord of hosts, eternal High Priest, Man, Emmanuel, and various titles from Isa. ix. 4–5. We noticed earlier that *PP* 57–65 establishes the identity of the one who became incarnate with the Lord of the patriarchs and prophets; like *IP* 46, it has four principal testimonia (*PP* 61–4). This in turn corresponded to the identification of the saviour as 'the LORD, the God of our fathers' in Deut. xxvi. 7. Direct influence is improbable, but it is possible that the first two of *IP*'s titles, *κύριος* and *θεός*, reflect a tradition which derived ultimately from this Deuteronomy text. It certainly answers to Melito's second theme, *τίς ὁ τῷ πάσχοντι συμπαθὼν*. There follows in *IP* 47–9 a passage which argues the necessity of the incarnation so that mortal man might be saved: 'it was necessary both that sin should be destroyed and that the body should be set free' (47, p. 173). This bodily existence enables Christ to defeat death, and this is the Pascha which he suffered (48–9): *πάθει πάθους ἡλευθέρωσε καὶ θανάτῳ θάνατον ἐνίκησε* (49). These three chapters thus treat more fully precisely those themes which Melito states succinctly in *PP* 66, cited on p. 37 above. Melito goes on to expand his themes chiefly in terms of the Old Testament (*PP* 67–71),

and in terms of the ingratitude of Israel in crucifying Christ (*PP* 72–100). The whole of *PP* 66–103, we observed, corresponds in various ways to Deut. xxvi. 8, the deliverance from Egypt and the associated wonders. Pseudo-Hippolytus lacks most of the Old Testament typology, but expands upon the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ in his own way in *IP* 50–60. He develops the idea of the cosmic cross (50–1); he discusses the nature of Christ's death (55–8). But a number of his thoughts may be found already in the corresponding passage, *PP* 66–103: the Creator at whose death the cosmos reels (*IP* 55; *PP* 81–3, 96–9); Christ's miracles (*IP* 48, 57; *PP* 72, 78, 86, 89–90); his nakedness (*IP* 52; *PP* 97); his crown of thorns and bitter drink (*IP* 53; *PP* 78–80, 93). Like Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus finishes his account with the thought of the ascension of man to heaven in Christ and a hymnodic peroration (*IP* 61–3; *PP* 100–5). Thus it will be seen that, broadly speaking, *IP* 43–63 represents a sequence of paschal recitation not unlike that in *PP* 46–105, but with its Old Testament background largely suppressed. Allusions to the Jewish Passover Haggadah are not conspicuous, though there is one possible exception not so far noticed. The traditional Haggadah, expounding Deut. xxvi. 8, has a substantial commentary on the words, 'And the LORD brought us out of Egypt': '—not by the hand of an angel, and not by the hand of a seraph, and not by the hand of a messenger, but the Holy One, blessed be He, in His glory and in His person, as it is said: [Exod. xii. 12 is quoted and explained]'.¹ Compare *IP* 45, p. 165, ll. 8–10: οὐκ ἀγγέλοις, οὐκ ἀρχαγγέλοις τὴν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν λειτουργίαν ἐνεχείρισεν, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ὁ λόγος ὅλον τὸν ἀγῶνα τὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀνεδέξατο πειθόμενος ταῖς πατρῴαις ἐντολαῖς. This coincidence is not negligible. As in the case that God made the world in Nisan, the author may here reproduce a genuine trace of Jewish Passover tradition.²

It is clear that in various ways *IP* represents a later stage in the development of Christian paschal homiletic than does Melito. The reason for considering it at some length was that it shows the same two-part structure as *PP*, an exposition based on Exod. xii and a paschal Haggadah. In the case of *IP* the question whether the parts ever subsisted separately does not arise; the pattern of the whole is discussed in *IP* 4–8, and the unity of the work thus established. But this unity may itself be one of those features of *IP* which mark it as later—in development as well as date—than *PP*.

Conclusions

We have argued that the affinities between Melito's *Peri Pascha* and the Jewish Passover Haggadah are sufficient to justify the view that a

¹ Roth, p. 24.

² *IP* 17, p. 145.

connection exists, but that in its present form *PP* cannot be called a Passover Haggadah. Once it is recognized, however, that *PP* 1-45 represents a tradition of pre-paschal homiletic, we were able to show that *PP* 46-105 fulfils the general conditions and has the general outline appropriate for a paschal Haggadah, as well as containing numerous affinities in detail. So clearly defined is the division in *PP* that it may be plausibly argued that it is a work consciously composed in two parts. We were able to confirm this twofold structure from the existence of the Georgian version in just these two parts, from a notice in Eusebius, and from the later Pseudo-Hippolytean homily on the Pascha. More research is needed into the question of the source of Melito's Jewish traditions, whether it was Palestinian or Asiatic, Hebrew or Greek. Nor can we readily determine from the data how far behind Melito the use of such Jewish paschal tradition went, whether it was primitive in the Christian tradition or recent. But it might be worth inquiring whether early Christian writings which survey the human lot from the fall to salvation in Christ do not also in part rest upon the same kind of haggadic recitation at the Christian Passover. One such passage would be Romans i-viii. It is certainly to be hoped that points of contact will emerge between Melito's Christianized Haggadah and the pre-Christian Passover themes recently identified in the Targums.¹ STUART G. HALL

¹ See especially R. Le Déaut, *La Nuit pascale* (Analecta Biblica, 22), Rome, 1963.